CALFED WORKSHOP #6
April 15, 1996
Yellow Breakout Group
Notes

Facilitator: Tim Hicks
Program Staff: Steve Yaeger
Consultant Resource: Don Wagenet
Recorder/Notetaker: Craig Stevens

Attendees:
Ted Roefs -USBR
Peter Candy - Individual environmental interest
Dennis O'Connor - California Research Bureau
Bill Jacoby - San Diego County Water Authority
Karl Stinson, Alameda County Water District
Roy Wolfe, MWDSC
Bruce Herbold, USEPA
Joan Ryan, EDAW, Inc.
Cynthia Koehler, NHI
Paul Converse, El Dorado County Water Agency
Mike Nordstrom, San Joaquin Valley Agriculture
Jud Monroe - MWDSC
Marvin Feldman - Resource Decisions
Tom Boardman - San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority
Ed Winkler - MWDSC

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROCESS AND THE ALTERNATIVES

Peter - Regarding the through-Delta alternatives, what is the purpose of increasing flow through the Delta, improving water quality in southern Delta, reducing reverse flows, or improving flows to the export pumps? How well will these alternatives work in accomplishing these goals? **Steve - Alt E would widen channels between the diversion point and the pumps with setback levees including a mosaic of habitats. Emphasis is more on habitat restoration and conveyance rather than water quality. (Water quality means drinking water quality in the aqueducts). The studies needed to determine the water quality benefits and impacts of these alternatives have not been done. The effects on reverse flows have also not been studied yet. Alternative A doesn't have any emphasis on water quality, but is intended to reduce diversions in the Delta. The agricultural retirement that is part of Alternative A will, however, improve water quality in San Joaquin River. Alternative F doesn't have any focus on drinking water quality. Alternative B relies on existing channels. Off-stream storage could address drinking and ecosystem water quality in late summer.**

Bruce - None of the analyses have yet addressed Q-West.

Ted - Anything that improves flow across the Delta would tend to reduce reverse flows.

Mike Nordstrom - Is it an assumption that demand management would help to reduce reliance on Delta exports. This would frustrate efforts to reduce reliance on groundwater sources. **Steve - yes it is an underlying assumption.**

Jud - If you haven't thought about what you want to do with the water gained through Demand management, why do you want it? **Steve - We do know for what purposes we want this water, but we haven't tried to allocate the water among the purposes yet.**

Jud - Where did number needed from demand management come from? **Steve - most aggressive end of range of numbers generated from past published reports. The measures in Alternative "A" go beyond the most cost effective measures described in those reports, to some measures whose cost effectiveness hasn't yet been demonstrated.**

Bruce - In the breakout session, Lester (Snow) said he was thinking of buying out water contracts rather than using land retirement. Is that what you are thinking? **Steve - It is one option we are looking at.**

Bruce - If you retire land, you don't necessarily reduce the amount of water being used on that land. Sometimes the user gets water from somewhere else. **Steve - We would buy the land with the water. We are also looking for a more locally autonomous approach.**

Joan - Steve, could you describe the essential elements, emphasizing how they are different from core actions? Is it intended that core actions be implemented first, then essential elements? **Steve - there is some overlap. Core tend to revolve around existing programs. Essential elements take some of these actions a step further.**

Joan - Some alternatives include core or essential elements at a higher implementation level; is that additive or do these actions include the core and essential elements? **Steve - they build on the core and essential elements.**

Roy - Some core actions are specific, others general. Habitat is very specific, water quality is more general. Why? **Steve - That is generally true. Where core actions are parts of existing programs, the ranges come from those programs. Dick - We were trying to respond to the many comments asking for numbers to be added to alternatives.**

Roy - That doesn't make sense unless the detail is the same across the board. Management of water quality could describe the specific level of contaminants coming out of the Delta. **Steve - Core actions are defined as actions with broad support and everyone agrees on the level of implementation. Appropriate levels of TCMs and THMs are still debatable.**

Cynthia - What are you trying to accomplish on the ecosystem side? What is your vision for ecosystem restoration? **Steve - We've heard that comment a lot and are putting a lot of effort on that, but it is a tough job.**

Cynthia - Alternatives are getting narrowed very fast, and this fundamental issue isn't yet resolved. We need a vision to help decide if a good range of restoration is being considered. Some components of a good ecosystem restoration aren't yet

included. How does your effort at describing the vision fit in with the time frame for narrowing the alternatives? **Steve - Our preference is to get the vision done by mid-June, along with the 3-5 alternatives.**

Cynthia - You may have a narrow range of ecosystem restoration options unless you have defined the vision before defining the final alternatives. **Steve - there will still be a lot of opportunity to change the alternatives, even in Phase II.**

Jud (To Cynthia) - Gary Bobker has agency folks working on helping to develop this vision.

Jud (For Nat Bingham) - Why is habitat restoration in the Delta focused on edge habitat only, the most expensive way to provide minimum habitat? Flooding islands is a better way. Written material supporting this has been submitted.

Jud - We have submitted comments for months, but we have no evidence that they are in any of the alternatives. **Steve - Come in and talk to us. We would be glad to talk to you about the science of restoration.**

Mike - All of these alternatives have the underlying assumption that there are no limits to spending. We should set a limit on spending. Alternatives cost too much. **Steve - Prior experience in the Delta has taught us that unless you do a comprehensive solution, you aren't spending money wisely. Once you have developed a comprehensive solution, then you can find ways to reduce costs.**

Mike - we may be closing the door on low-cost big-effect alternatives.

Cynthia - What does feasibility mean if it doesn't mean cost feasibility? **Steve - This is a question that we should answer during Workshop #7.**

Peter - Demand management is implemented at a maximum level in Alternative A. Can you implement this with other alternatives? If not, why not.

Peter - What is the 100K acre-feet of water purchased in the San Joaquin basin to be used for? It is not very much. **Steve - dilution flows or pulse flows.**

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE "A"

STRENGTHS

Peter - "A" takes away from the emphasis on the building found in previous solutions. This balances out its weaknesses.

Cynthia - Agrees with Peter. Alternative A should be part of other alternatives, rather than a stand-alone alternative. Would like to have extensive demand management in other alternatives. (Steve - we need to have a range of implementation across the alternatives, so can't have extensive demand management in all alternatives. Also, feasibility of extensive demand management has been questioned by some in their comments. Also, some believe that reducing demand hardens demand during drought periods.)

Bruce - If exports were reduced to 5 million acre-feet, you could improve water quality for exports and reliability of exports. We need to define what our export goal is. The demand management is a good component even if the alternative is incomplete.

WEAKNESSES

Tom- If you retire land to free up water, that water will be used by other export water users with unfulfilled contracts. Buying the land isn't enough if you are trying to reduce exports.

Bill - Urban water districts would like to stay with the Best Management Practices already developed for water conservation. The CA urban water conservation council can update standards as needed without creating a competing bureaucracy.

Mike - Land retirement redirects impacts on agriculture which violates a solution principle.

Karl - Alternative A doesn't meet water supply, water quality or system reliability objectives. Violates solution principles through redirected impacts.

Ed - Doesn't address any of the solution principles. Could increase

conflicts rather than reduce them. This is not a win-win solution. Doesn't help water supply, water quality, system reliability and leaves

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pumps in the south Delta. Also removes funding partners from picture.

Karl - Alt A goes beyond what is reasonable to reduce demands and reduce dependence on Delta supplies. Even with improved conservation and storage, shortfall is not met.

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ALTERNATIVES "A, D and F"

STRENGTHS

Peter - reducing demand will help reverse flows in southern Delta and doesn't involve building structures. Good to keep water flowing through the Delta.

WEAKNESSES

Marvin - Water transfer opportunities should be greater than modest. **Steve - opportunities for transfers are not high under these alternatives because of operational constraints.**

Karl? - Alternatives A, D and F don't meet drinking water quality objectives. CUWA will provide numerical criteria that could be used to describe drinking water quality objectives.

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ALTERNATIVES "B, C, E, and G"

STRENGTHS

Enhances operational flexibility by decoupling north and south of Delta operations.

Alternative C provides flexibility in operations through multiple diversions.

WEAKNESSES

Karl - Even with new storage, unless you can move water through the Delta it doesn't do you any good. No improvement of drinking water quality.

Bruce - Instead of moving the point of diversion, we should have multiple point diversion points to allow flexibility of operations.

Ed - Agrees with Bruce on need for flexibility.

Alt C - Drinking water quality requirements should be used to help size the facility, It is premature at this time to arbitrarily size the facility.

ALTERNATIVES "H, I, and J"

STRENGTHS

Dennis - Opportunity for privatizing solutions is available with isolated facilities. Private capital instead of public funds can be used to build facilities.

Tom - Alternative J improves flexibility, but south Delta water quality should be alleviated with an ocean outfall. Steve - agricultural drainage isn't a Delta problem unless solution is to dump the drainage at Chipps Island.

WEAKNESSES

Peter - Won't alternatives H, I & J reduce water quality in the southern Delta? Steve - this may be true, but exchanges with San Joaquin tributaries may address water quality in the south Delta.

Karl - flooding of islands with peat soils will cause water quality problems. Cost is also a problem for H & I. (Sealing of islands may solve this problem).

Ed - Water quality concerns with "H". "I" has many supply and quality benefits but it is too expensive and there are cheaper ways to achieve the same goals. "J" provides a lot of flexibility but has political problems.

Ted - Alternative H would lose a lot of water to evaporation.

Bruce - Would like to have a paper on guarantees before proceeding with H, I, or J.

COMPARING ALTERNATIVES TO SOLUTION PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES		
ALT.	UNMODIFIED ALTERNATIVE MEETS SOLUTION PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES	UNMODIFIED ALTERNATIVE DOESN'T MEET SOLUTION PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES
A		**Paul** - Degrades water supply reliability. Needs to be supplemented with water supply reliability component.
B		
C	**Karl** - likes but need to analyze the size. Improves water supply reliability, water quality for drinking water, system reliability, ecosystem quality, reduce or eliminate reverse flows.	**Peter** - Isolated facility degrades water quality in the Delta.
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J	**Karl** - likes but need to analyze the size.	

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS TO ALTERNATIVES	
ALT.	SUGGESTIONS
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	

BIN COMMENTS

Peter - we should maximize conjunctive use programs in the San Joaquin Valley.

Paul - Conjunctive use requires a lot of plumbing to provide dual sources for people. It is a big cost.

Tom - Pricing structure need to be designed to facilitate conjunctive use.

Karl - Need to free up constraints in Delta before building expensive storage.

Bruce (In response to Karl) - Bar charts shown earlier today, show that south-of-Delta storage would be used more often than north-of-Delta storage. Storage is a limitation on exports (the state pumps may be idle later this year because there is no where to put water).

Cynthia - When will common information be generated and when will differences be negotiated?

Marvin - Impacts of components are not readily obvious. If information of impacts of components were available, it would help to assemble alternatives.

Ted - I support Bruce's point of view. Sizing of an isolated facility should be based on analysis of some kind.

Paul - Sensitivity analysis of decisions should be done. Focus your attention on areas where differences are significant.

Tom - Flexibility is desired by everyone. Need to do modeling to help refine and narrow alternatives.

Bruce - Workshop #7 should focus on bringing more detail on component effectiveness. What would be the effect of each component (limiting demand, upstream storage, downstream storage, conjunctive use, isolated transfer facility)?

Ted - would like to see a spreadsheet analysis of various sized isolated transfer facilities. It should recognize that part of the cost is providing in-Delta supplies to meet water quality standards.

Cynthia - easier to come to common agreement with water supply than ecosystem items

Bruce - We should analyze these alternatives using DWRSIM so we can have some answers about operations. Water supply reliability, water quality studies needed. What components are effective, north of Delta storage, south of Delta storage, isolated facility?

Cynthia - Would like to see more aggressive component showing restoration in the Delta.

Bruce - If Delta islands are converted to storage, other habitat has to be provided in mitigation.

Bruce - Review alternatives to find places to increase system flexibility.

Tom - Need to maintain flexibility to mix and match components.

Paul - Need to relax rules that protect certain people's interests. Provide a more flexible process to replace these rules.

Ted - Change the schedule to provide more time for analysis.

Peter - Change the schedule to provide more details of benefits of components.

Cynthia - Would like to see an environmentally superior alternative. Need to see an alternative that maximizes environmental benefits. None of the alternatives deal with the flow issue. Steve - we have put that on hold until we have the ecosystem vision work done.

Dennis - Be able to demonstrate why components are dropped to protect yourself. Have a good reason for dropping components.

Ted - I'm afraid that the wrong alternatives will be chosen for lack of information.

Marvin - We have insufficient evidence regarding the affordability of these alternatives. In addition to capital costs, we need to know about O&M costs, staging and revenues to judge affordability.